

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VALLET 01169 01 OF 02 051501Z
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 NSCE-00 SP-02 L-01
INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 ACDA-10 DODE-00 /044 W
-----026808 051556Z /41

R 051444Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8158
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VALLETTA 01169

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MT, US, IT
SUBJECT: FELICE MISSION

1. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FELICE MATTER THAT COULD RESULT IN THE RECALL OF THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO MALTA, ERIC DA-RIN. FACTS OF THE MATTER FOLLOW.

2. MINTOFF TELEPHONED ME YESTERDAY TO SAY THAT HE WAS "WORRIED" ABOUT CERTAIN NEWS THAT HAD REACHED HIM AND WANTED TO KNOW WHAT LIGHT I COULD SHED ON THE MATTER. FELICE HAD COME TO SEE HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY TO SAY THAT HE HAD LEARNED FROM THE DEPUTY NATIONALIST PARTY LEADER (GUIDO DEMARCO) THAT DA-RIN HAD INFORMED DEMARCO OF THE FELICE VISIT TO WASHINGTON. THIS, SAID MINTOFF, WAS A MOST UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT AND HE WANTED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT.

3. I TOLD MINTOFF I HAD NOT INFORMED ANY OTHER MALTESE OF THIS EXERCISE. I HAD BRIEFED MY ITALIAN COLLEAGUE BECAUSE I FELT THAT OUR ITALIAN ALLIES SHOULD BE AWARE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT. (I HAD ALSO BRIEFED THE BRITISH.)
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VALLET 01169 01 OF 02 051501Z

HOWEVER IN DOING SO I HAD EMPHASIZED TO DA-RIN THAT I HAD NOT INFORMED THE NATIONALIST LEADERSHIP AND THAT THE MATTER SHOULD BE VERY CLOSELY HELD.

4. I ALSO TOLD MINTOFF THAT I THOUGHT HE HAD TO RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH A MISSION BY FELICE COULD NOT INDEFINITELY REMAIN SECRET IN ANY EVENT. TO THIS THE PRIME

MINISTER RESPONDED THAT HE APPRECIATED THAT BUT TO HAVE THE MATTER LEAK TO THE NATIONALISTS THROUGH THE "ITALIAN NUMBER ONE" WAS SOMETHING ELSE. I SAID I DID NOT WANT TO COMMENT ON THAT.

5. I FOLLOWED UP THIS EXCHANGE WITH A PERSONAL NOTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER REITERATING MY POSITION FOR THE RECORD. IN MY NOTE I PREFACED WHAT I HAD TO SAY WITH THE COMMENT THAT I KNEW HE WOULD APPRECIATE I HAD HAD SOME CONCERN THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE OTHER PARTY, WITH WHOM WE NATURALLY ALSO SOUGHT TO MAINTAIN A RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE, HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF THIS EXERCISE INVOLVING MY GOVERNMENT.

6. WHEN I SOUGHT OUT DA-RIN AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION LAST EVENING HE HAD NOT YET BEEN APPROACHED BY GOM. I SAID I WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR FROM MINTOFF THAT HE, DA-RIN, HAD APPARENTLY SPOKEN TO THE NATIONALISTS ABOUT A MATTER WHERE I HAD EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR CONFIDENCE. HIS RESPONSE WAS THAT HE HAD CASUALLY COMMENTED TO DEMARCO ONE EVENING THAT THE NATIONALISTS APPEARED TO BE INCREASINGLY OPEN TO MINTOFF'S CONCEPT, CITING CERTAIN STATEMENTS BY FENECH ADAMI AS WELL AS TRAVELS BY FELICE TO BRUSSELS AND WASHINGTON, WHERE FELICE HAD "INDICATED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRINCIPLE OF NEUTRALITY AND THE ROLE THAT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES SHOULD PLAY IN THIS." DEMARCO'S RESPONSE HAD BEEN THAT THIS WAS NOT SO AND THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VALLET 01169 01 OF 02 051501Z

NATIONALISTS CONTINUE TO STAND FOR EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR MALTA'S SECURITY AND NOT SIMPLY ITS NEUTRALITY. DA-RIN INSISTED TO ME THAT HE HAD SAID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DEMARCO ABOUT HOW AND WHY FELICE HAD GONE TO WASHINGTON.

7. THIS MORNING I RECEIVED A NOTE FROM DA-RIN TRANSMITTING A COPY OF WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A VERBATIM ACCOUNT OF THIS CONVERSATION WITH DEMARCO. HIS NOTE ALSO TOLD ME THAT HE WAS BEING RECALLED BECAUSE OF "COLLUSION" WITH THE OPPOSITION.

8. IT APPEARS THAT AFTER OUR CONVERSATION LAST EVENING DA-RIN HAD SENT THIS VERBATIM ACCOUNT TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TO CLARIFY HIS POSITION. THIS RESULTED IN A MIDNIGHT VISIT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL EDGAR MIZZI TO DA-RIN TO CONVEY MINTOFF'S VIEW (CONVEYED ALSO BY TELEPHONE BY MIZZI TO THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY IN ROME) THAT THIS AFFAIR HAD RAISED SUCH QUESTIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S MIND AS TO THE CONTINUED UTILITY OF DA-RIN'S PRESENCE IN MALTA AS TO CAUSE THEM TO SUGGEST ORALLY TO THE GOI THAT IT CONSIDER DA-RIN'S WITHDRAWAL. THE POINT WAS MADE THAT THE INITIATIVE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD BEST COME

FROM ITALY. IN CONVEYING THIS POSITION MIZZI REFERRED ALSO TO AN EARLIER INCIDENT THAT HAD TRIGGERED MINTOFF'S IRRITATION INVOLVING DA-RIN'S DECISION TO ATTEND PERSONALLY A RALLY CALLED BY THE NATIONALIST PARTY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE GOI IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MORO KIDNAPPING.

9. THOSE ARE THE FACTS AS I HAVE THEM. DA-RIN HOPES TO GO TO ROME THIS WEEKEND TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER WITH HIS GOVERNMENT. HE BELIEVES IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT ANYTHING WILL CHANGE TO CAUSE THE GOVERNMENT HERE TO RECONSIDER ITS POSITION. HE DOES NOT HAVE HIS GOVERNMENT'S REACTION AS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VALLET 01169 02 OF 02 051513Z

ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 NSCE-00 SP-02 L-01

INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 ACDA-10 DODE-00 /044 W

-----026953 051556Z /41

R 051444Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8159

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 VALLETTA 01169

LIMDIS

YET.

10. I TOLD DA-RIN I WAS FLABBERGASTED AND APPALLED (HOPING MY TELEPHONE WAS MOMENTARILY BUGGED). I SAID NO ONE HAD SOUGHT TO WORK MORE SYMPATHETICALLY WITH THE MINTOFF GOVERNMENT TO PUT THE LATTER'S NEUTRALITY CONCEPT IN A POSITIVE FRAMEWORK THAN HE HAD. I REGRETTED THIS DEVELOPMENT BOTH PERSONALLY AND OFFICIALLY ON BEHALF OF MY GOVERNMENT.

11. COMMENT: DA-RIN WAS OBVIOUSLY LESS THAN DISCREET IN SAYING WHAT HE DID TO DEMARCO. NONETHELESS MINTOFF'S REACTION IS FAR BEYOND WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE CALLED FOR UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. A MORE NORMAL PROCEDURE FROM THE BEGINNING WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO TAKE THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION INTO HIS CONFIDENCE, OR FOR FELICE TO INFORM THE LEADER (AS HE ORIGINALLY TOLD ME HE WOULD DO). BUT THAT IS NOT THE WAY THE GAME IS PLAYED HERE AND PERHAPS NO ONE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT BETTER

THAN ERIC DA-RIN. LAINGEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, RECALLS, PROGRESS REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VALLET01169
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780192-0579
Format: TEL
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780587/aaaacwbr.tel
Line Count: 170
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dc643aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2772861
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FELICE MISSION
TAGS: PEPR, MT, US, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dc643aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014